

COLUMBIA COLLEGE



HOMESTAY PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK

Creating Memories

Updated: January 2025

Greetings from the Columbia College Homestay Program

Thank you for choosing to stay in Homestay! A program designed for students to live with a Canadian family, experience the culture while providing opportunities to make life-long friendships.

When studying in Canada you will notice how multicultural Vancouver and our host families are. They come from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Some families have been born in Canada, while others have immigrated to Canada many years ago. They are all Canadian.

While each homestay is different, they are all kind, caring people who enjoy learning about different cultures from around the world. They are happy to share lives as respected and active members of the household.

This Student Handbook will explain what you can expect when living in homestay, and what your host family expects from you.

Columbia College is excited for you to begin your next chapter in Canada. Homestay will help with that transition while allowing you to focus on your studies.

If you any questions, please reach out to me.

Regards,

Rosemary Mooney

Homestay Coordinator

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Contents

Homestay Options / Fees	
Custodianship vs Private Students	
Payments and Refunds	
Homestay Facilities	
Damages	
What to Expect	
Host Family Expectations	
What to Bring	
Move in and Leaving / Changing Homestays	
Transportation	
Homestay Issues	
Participate	
Support Services	

HOMESTAY OPTIONS / FEES

Full homestay fees are required prior to the student being placed in homestay. Due to host availability, it is highly recommended the student does not wait until their visa is approved before applying or paying fees. Placement is not guaranteed past the due date or without full payment made. Homestay is on a 'first come, first serve' basis and all requests may not be met.

Homestay fees are due on the 1st of every month regardless the day the student moves in.

Below are the homestay options we provide:

ADULT STUDENTS

<i>Homestay Option</i>	<i>Application Fee</i>	<i>Monthly Fee</i>	<i>Nightly Fee</i>	<i>Airport pickup</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>3 Daily Meals</i>	<i>\$375</i>	<i>\$1,200 x 2</i>	<i>\$50</i>	<i>\$100</i>	<i>\$2,875</i>
<i>Dinner only</i>	<i>\$375</i>	<i>\$1,000 x 2</i>	<i>\$50</i>	<i>\$100</i>	<i>\$2,475</i>
<i>Room only</i>	<i>\$375</i>	<i>\$900 x 2</i>	<i>\$50</i>	<i>\$100</i>	<i>\$2,275</i>

**There is no cooking in homestay. Students will have the use of a toaster, kettle, microwave and storage in the refrigerator when choosing the 'dinner or room only option. **

**Notify the Homestay Department if the host is charging any additional fees than originally agreed upon. **

CUSTODIANSHIP STUDENTS

<i>Homestay Option</i>	<i>Application Fee</i>	<i>Monthly Fee</i>	<i>Nightly Fee</i>	<i>Airport Fee</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>3 Daily Meals</i>	<i>\$375</i>	<i>\$1,300 x 5</i>	<i>\$50</i>	<i>\$100</i>	<i>\$7,350</i>
<i>Dinner only</i>	<i>\$375</i>	<i>\$1,100 x 5</i>	<i>\$50</i>	<i>\$100</i>	<i>\$6,350</i>
<i>Room only</i>	<i>\$375</i>	<i>\$1,000 x 5</i>	<i>\$50</i>	<i>\$100</i>	<i>\$5,850</i>

**There is no cooking in homestay. Students will have the use of a toaster, kettle, microwave and storage in the refrigerator when choosing the 'dinner or room only option. **

**Notify the Homestay Department if the host is charging any additional fees than originally agreed upon. **

** A \$50 monitoring fee is applied one-time per semester for custodianship students only **

CUSTODIAN VS PRIVATE STUDENTS

Under the Ministry of Education, students who are under 19 years of age and studying in High School will require a custodian. Columbia College can take on this role when students stay in a Columbia College homestay.

The IRCC website states, students who are 17 years and older, do not require a custodian when studying in a University Transfer program. However, it is highly recommended those students who are specifically 17 years of age obtain a custodian to avoid any difficulties when applying for their study permit and entering Canada.

The host family will take on the custodianship role a short time after the student is living with them. The student must remain in the Homestay Program until they turn 19, leave Columbia College, or obtain a private custodian, even when transferring to university classes at the college.

Columbia College does not obtain custodianship if the student does not live in a Columbia College homestay. They must obtain a private custodian outside of the homestay program.

SLEEPOVERS / CURFEW

All custodial students must have permission from their host family and/or natural parents prior to spending the night outside of the homestay.

Students should be organized and provide sufficient notice to their host family or the Homestay Department depending on where they plan to stay. Students should not assume the sleepover will be approved.

It is up to the discretion of the host family whether they feel comfortable allowing their student to spend the night outside of the home, or if another student can spend the night at theirs.

For consistency to the program and safety of the student, the natural parents CANNOT directly provide permission to the host family without first providing written permission to the Homestay Department. The Homestay Department will contact the host family based on the natural parent's decision.

Custodianship students have a curfew (when to be home). If the curfew is being abused, natural parents are notified, and measures are taken. It could lead to leaving the homestay program if it happens consistently.

PRIVATE CUSTODIAN

Those students who move into homestay where the host family has taken on custodianship, then later wish to leave the homestay program **MUST** obtain a private custodian before moving. A family member or friend can take on this role. Below are the requirements of a private custodian:

The individual must be a Canadian citizen, or have (PR) Permanent Residency status, reside in the lower mainland, 25 years or older, and able to speak English fluently. This new appointed private custodian will be the colleges' point of contact while the student is studying at the college.

Students who arrive with a private custodian can stay in Homestay and are considered an adult student with adult homestay fees being applied.

ADDITIONAL FEES

MOVING FEE: Students who request to change homestays after their first initial month will be charged a \$200 moving fee per occurrence.

PRIVATE BATHROOM: (Upon availability) The student will pay the host family directly \$100 per month in cash, starting on their first initial month of homestay.

SPECIAL DIETARY: (Upon availability) halal, gluten-free, lactose free, vegan. The student will pay the host family directly \$200 per month in cash, starting on their first initial month of homestay.

VEGETARIAN: (Upon availability) The student will pay the host family directly \$100 per month in cash, starting on their first initial month of homestay.

PAYMENTS

ADULT STUDENTS

The college will pay the host family for the student's 1st month of homestay only. Starting the second month onward, the student is responsible to pay the host directly in cash or e-transfer. Please speak to your host family to determine how they wish to be paid.

The student's second month of prepaid homestay is used to pay the host family for the student's last month in homestay, when they decide to leave the homestay program or if any damages have been made during the student's stay.

CUSTODIANSHIP STUDENTS

The college will administer prepaid homestay fees every month to the host family for the entire semester.

A homestay invoice will be provided to the student approximately 6 weeks prior to the semester ending indicating when homestay fees are due for the following semester.

** The student will not be able to register the following semester until fees are received. **

REFUNDS

ADULT STUDENTS

Cancelling homestay after applying:

- **\$375 placement fee is non-refundable**

Cancelling homestay after student arrival:

- **\$375 placement fee, one month of homestay fee is non-refundable**

Student leaves homestay prior to the minimum two-month stay:

- **\$375 placement fee, second month of homestay fee is non-refundable.**

CUSTODIANSHIP STUDENTS

Cancelling homestay after applying:

- **\$375 placement fee, 50% of custodianship set-up fee is non-refundable**

Cancelling homestay after student arrival:

- **\$375 placement fee, full custodianship fee, one month of homestay fee is non-refundable**

Student leaves homestay prior to the minimum two-month stay:

- **\$375 placement fee, second month of homestay fee is non-refundable.**

Visa Denied – 50% of custodianship set-up and full placement fee is refunded

**** In the event of a homestay emergency where the student must move, the student will be placed with another host family. ****

HOMESTAY FACILITIES

BATHROOM

Most students will share a bathroom with other students in the home or the host family. They should limit showering time to 10-15 minutes and should not be taken too late in the evening to avoid disrupting others in the home. Canadian homes have hot water tanks with a limited supply of hot water. Be considerate of others in the home who need to shower.

Leave the bathroom neat; wipe counter tops and surrounding areas of any water, clean hair from the shower drains or bathtub, and remove your toiletries from the bathroom. Ask your host where to hang your towel.

Speak to the host family when arriving on cleanliness expectations. Toiletries such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste, deodorant, facial tissue, and feminine hygiene products are the student's responsibility to purchase.

TOILET

Always flush the toilet after each use and wipe the toilet seat if necessary. Do not put anything in the toilet besides toilet paper. Sanitary products and other items will clog the toilet and cause damage. Ask the host family how to dispose of sanitary products. The host will supply toilet paper; be careful not to use too much as it is costly and may clog the toilet.

If the toilet clogs, tell the host family immediately. Any damages to the bathroom the student will be responsible to pay, if it is determined to be their fault.

KITCHEN

Depending on the host, the student may or may not be allowed 'light cooking' with supervision. Almost always, the use of the stove is off limits to students. The host family will show the student how to use kitchen appliances. If they do not, don't be afraid to ask how if unsure. Ask the host their kitchen expectations such as washing their own dishes, loading the dishwasher. After using the kitchen, the student is responsible to clean up after themselves and put things back where they belong.

FOOD

A typical Canadian breakfast is usually cold or continental, and 'help yourself' style. It may include cereal, toast, fruit, yogurt. Some hosts may prepare a hot breakfast on weekends.

Lunch is prepared by either the student or host. It can consist of food from the dinner before (leftovers) or a sandwich, fruit, granola bar. If making your own lunch, don't be shy and ask your host for lunch suggestions if you are unsure on what to make.

Dinner will be prepared by the host. It is our biggest meal of the day. Students should communicate and provide sufficient notice if they will not be home. Food is expensive in Canada for that reason, we do not waste it.

If you are not getting enough food, it may be necessary to purchase additional food on your own that the host family can store for you.

Speak to the Homestay Coordinator if there are any food concerns.

LAUNDRY

Laundry is done once a week either by the student or host family. The host will show the student how to use the washer and dryer and a preferred day, if necessary. The host family will provide laundry soap.

INTERNET

The student will be given permission to use the host family's internet without an extra charge. Downloading or the usage of any pornographic sites are prohibited.

ELECTRICITY

The student should be considerate and turn off lights, fans, heaters, electronics, and close windows when they leave for school or not in their bedroom. It is a waste of electricity and a security risk if they are left on or if windows left open.

CELL PHONE

Students arriving with a cell phone should purchase a SIM card. If the student is under the age of 19, they will purchase 'pay as you go' minutes, not requiring a cell phone plan. Your host family will assist you with this process. The host family will not sign any cell phone contracts if the student is not eligible to get a cell phone plan on their own.

DAMAGES

Ask how to use any household appliances to avoid any damages. The student is responsible to pay for damages such as bedding, household appliances, furniture, re-keying of locks, exterminator, fire or flood damage, etc.

Always speak to the Homestay Coordinator before paying the host family any money for damages, or any additional fees that were not originally agreed upon prior to coming.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The host family will speak English in the presence of the student while providing a clean, safe environment, with nutritional meals, when requested.

The student will have their own furnished bedroom, including bedding, linens, desk or wardrobe, laundry facilities, wireless internet, a house key, and meals, when requested.

The student should notify the Homestay Coordinator if the host family is not meeting these expectations or if the student does not feel safe in their homestay.

HOST FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

Every host family will have different homestay rules. Talk to them and ask questions.

- **Communication is crucial in the success of the student's stay. Contact the host family prior to arriving and get to know them.**
- **Be polite and respectful towards the host family and other members living in the home, including pets.**
- **Have an open mind to Canadian food. It is very different from back home. Trying different foods will enrich your experience.**
- **Speak English in the presence of the host family.**
- **Always lock the door when leaving or returning home. Double check it is locked.**
- **Absolutely NO smoking cigarettes, marijuana, vaping or drinking alcohol in or around the home.**
- **No electric small appliances, candles, or incense allowed in the student's room.**
- **Do not borrow items in the home without permission or go into any other bedrooms uninvited.**
- **Ask if friends can come over before assuming they can. Overnight guests may or may not be permitted and should be discussed with the host beforehand.**
- **No relations with other homestay students living in the same homestay. The student will be asked to leave the homestay program with little or no notice.**
- **Quiet time in the home is between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. During this time, do not speak loudly when talking to family back home, socializing in the home, playing video games.**
- **Host families MAY go into the student's bedroom with little or no notice to ensure the student is respecting their home.**
- **Homestay is for Columbia College students only. Parents and family members traveling with the student MUST make their own arrangements to stay elsewhere.**

HELPFUL HINTS

- **When completing the Homestay Application be specific in your requests. It can avoid being placed with a family that will not accommodate requests, such as food.**
- **In Canada, it is common our bedrooms are in an above-ground basement.**

WHAT TO BRING

- Toiletries; body soap, deodorant, shampoo, hair dryer, laptop, cell phone/cell phone charger, etc.
- Appropriate clothing. The host family can assist where to purchase seasonal clothing at affordable prices.
- Slippers and/or flip flops for showering (optional).
- An umbrella! Vancouver has wet days all year long – be prepared.
- Small amount of Canadian currency for incidentals; extra nights in homestay (if arriving early), taxi, Compass card, SIM card, snacks.

MOVE IN DATE

Contact the host family **BEFORE** booking your flight to ensure the room will be ready at that time.

If the student moves in before the semester starts, they are responsible to pay their host family directly in cash, \$50 per night for the remaining nights left in that month. Be prepared and have Canadian funds to pay your host upon arriving, or shortly after moving in.

If the student moves into homestay after the semester starts, the host family will be paid for the full month as they have ‘reserved’ the room.

If the student goes on holiday, there are no discount in homestay fees. The student will pay their host family for the entire time they are away. Their room and belongings will be left untouched waiting for their return.

If the student leaves belongings in the homestay and does not return, the host may pack their belongings and give them to charity. It is up to the student to contact the host family and arrange how to collect or store them. A storage fee will apply.

Homestay is reserved for Columbia College students who are registered and currently studying at the college. If the student is no longer studying at the college, they **MUST** leave homestay once their studies are complete.

LEAVING OR CHANGING HOMESTAYS

When leaving the homestay program contact the Homestay Coordinator 30 days before wanting to move. A Notice of Termination form will be given to the student to complete with the host. If sufficient notice is not given the student will be penalized an additional ½ months’ rent that will be paid to the host family.

Host families realize students will move for various reasons, going back to their country, moving to an apartment, or wanting to live with another Canadian host family. Students should not be afraid to leave homestay; their host family understands and will not be hurt!

TRANSPORTATION

All Columbia College students will purchase a compass card and take public transit to the college. We are in the heart of Vancouver where homestays are not located.

When the student first arrives in Vancouver, the college can arrange airport pickup for a fee. Amigo International will welcome the student and take them directly to the homestay, hotel or a designated address if the student is not yet ready to move to homestay. The student is then responsible to make their own way to the homestay afterwards.

HOMESTAY ISSUES

The host family will do their best to resolve small conflicts in the home before notifying the Homestay department. Any time during the student's stay, the student should reach out to the Homestay Coordinator to share any concerns they may be experiencing to discuss in a safe, confidential manner.

PARTICIPATE

The college organizes many student activities, many of which are free. To enrich their college and homestay experience, we highly recommend getting involved. Time goes by quickly! It is a great way to make new friends and feel part of a community.

SUPPORT

The college offers an abundance of emotional support for our students. If at any time, the student feels lonely, anxious, unsafe, or need to talk for any reason, they should reach out to the Homestay Coordinator, their host family or any staff member at the college. We also have experienced well-qualified Mental Health counsellors on site, along with two school nurses who are available to meet with our students on short notice.

Confidential resources are available:

- A) keep.meSAFE is a Mental Wellness Student Support app that provides solutions-focused support for all Columbia College students 24/7/365 from anywhere in the world. Students can access support from qualified counsellors in their language and culture to help them deal with any school, health, or general life concern.

By using the My SSP app, students also have access to a wide variety of multilingual self-help resources, including articles, videos and assessment tools. Additionally, the program offers different referral pathways for students to access counselling,

consultative support for staff and faculty, community outreach, as well as ad hoc support.

Ways to connect:

Mobile App: Students can download the free My SSP app today and connect with a counsellor anytime by chat or telephone via the Apple App Store or Google Play

Telephone: Students can access phone support anytime of the day by calling: 1-844-451-9700 (Canada and USA) or 001-416-380-6578 (rest of the world)

Web: Students without access to a smartphone or tablet can access chat support and self-help resources online at: <https://www.keepmesafe.org/ca-us/support-and-access.php>.

B) Kids Help Phone (Tel: 1-800-668-6868)

Provides counselling and mental health support

C) Kelty Mental Health Resource Center (<http://keltymentalhealth.ca>) Resources regarding mental health issues, substance use, medications, and healthy living.

D) HealthLink BC 8-1-1- Services (Tel 811)

Free of charge provincial health information and advice phone line available in British Columbia.

E) Suicide Crisis Helpline (Text/Tel: 988) <https://988.ca>

Confidential, free 24-hour access to responders trained in suicide prevention.

EMERGENCY NUMBER

In the event of an emergency only, please call 604-671-8525.

Any other inquiries, please contact Rosemary Mooney, the Homestay Coordinator; via TEAMS or email rmooney@columbiacollege.ca.